



June 24, 2011

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USDA Designates Two Counties in Massachusetts as Primary Natural Disaster Areas

The Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Richard Burke would like to inform producers that Hampden and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts have been designated as primary natural disaster areas due to physical damage and losses caused by tornadoes that occurred on June 1, 2011.

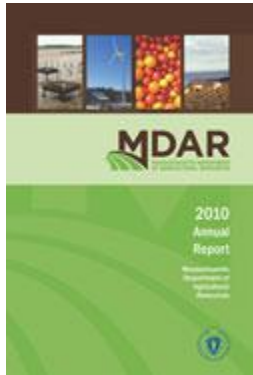
In addition, Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Middlesex and Norfolk Counties in Massachusetts are named as contiguous disaster counties where eligible family farmers may qualify for FSA emergency physical loss loan assistance.

Effective June 15, 2011, emergency loans may be made available to any applicant with a qualifying physical loss in the counties named. This approval is limited to applicants who suffered severe physical losses only. Emergency loan applications will be received until February 15, 2012.

For more information and assistance, please contact:

Beverly Rice - Hampshire/Hampden County FSA Service Center - 413-585-1000, or
Randy Kleiner - Worcester County FSA Service Center - 508-829-4477

MDAR Annual Report is Here!



Our 2010 [Annual Report](#) is now available online for your perusal. This report serves as a valuable measure of our agency's activities throughout the 2010 calendar year and provides an insightful snapshot of the state of the Commonwealth's agricultural landscape. It should be noted that our annual report serves to meet a variety of statutorily required reports as well as updates from the dozens of programs that are administered by MDAR. It is also important to note that this publication is produced in-house by dedicated and talented MDAR staff and thanks to all who took time from their many other duties to generate it.

And congratulations go to our in-house amateur photographers -- Gerard Kennedy (grazing sheep), Rick LeBlanc (tomatoes), Gerry Palano (wind turbine), and David Webber (shellfish growing site) -- whose photos are featured on the cover of our annual report!

Happy June-is-Dairy-Month! - Keep Local Dairy Farms -18 Months and Going Strong

Keep Local Farms is now in its second year and is pleased to announce that the first payment to dairy farm members is expected to be sent in



Good for our farmers,
community, economy & you.
KeepLocalFarms.org

September 2011. The program is still in its infancy which means that the first payment will not be a large amount when divided among the 1300 dairy farm members in New England. However, the payment is symbolic and demonstrates consumers' willingness to support New England dairy farms and the Keep Local Farms program.

The goal of Keep Local Farms is to help educate consumers about the value of local dairy farms, increase demand for dairy products and raise funds to support New England dairy farms. These goals are being accomplished by partnering with retailers, universities and businesses. Many colleges and universities are contributing 10 cents per single serve milk sold on campus, retail locations are allowing shoppers to contribute at the register, and many other exciting promotions are happening with businesses across New England. (For a complete list of partners, visit the program partners page at KeepLocalFarms.org.)

All dairy farms in New England are eligible and encouraged to be part of this program and more than 1,300 dairy farms are currently part of Keep Local Farms. Dairy farms join Keep Local Farms by becoming members of the New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative (NEFDFC).* Only members of NEFDFC will be eligible to receive payments from Keep Local

Farms.

If you are a dairy farmer and would like to become a member of the New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative, email Lucinda Williams at nefdcf@gmail.com.

We hope you will choose to be part of this innovative program. For additional information, visit www.KeepLocalFarms.org.

* The following dairy marketing cooperatives members are already part of New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative: Massachusetts Co-op Milk Producers Federation Inc., St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Agri-Mark, Inc., Dairylea, Dairy Farmers of America, Central Vermont Producers Group

Agricultural Composting Workshop – August 5th & 6th

Agricultural Composting Workshop, Belchertown, MA. Registration fee \$80 (limit 25 students). Learn all the important elements to successfully run and manage an agricultural composting operation. Workshop will include classroom lectures, hands-on exercises, and field demonstrations. Preference given to agricultural composters currently registered with MDAR; however, others are welcome, space permitting. Hosted by MDAR, MassDEP, and New England Small Farm Institute. For more information contact Gerard Kennedy, 617-626-1773, Gerard.Kennedy@state.ma.us.

Two Opportunities to Exhibit or Perform at the Massachusetts Building during the Big E, West Springfield

Massachusetts Day - September 22nd

Each year the Massachusetts Building features businesses, non-profits, and educational exhibitors on the front lawn. Along with exhibits, we feature diverse acts on a stage. If interested in exhibiting or performing on our stage, [click for details and application](#) [pdf]. Contacts: Steve Walsh, Steve.Walsh@state.ma.us, 617-973-8586, or Rick LeBlanc, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us.

Salute to Specialty Foods Day – September 30th

This event is a great opportunity to obtain feedback and increase awareness about your product to a large audience from all over New England. If you are interested in exhibiting and selling Massgrown or produced products, [click here for details and application](#) [pdf], or contact Bonita Oehlke, Bonita.Oehlke@state.ma.us, 617-626-1753.

Bristol/Norfolk County Farm Service Agency to Relocate

The Bristol/Norfolk County Farm Service Agency (FSA) currently located at 84 Center Street in Dighton, MA will be relocating to 104 Dean Street, Suite 204, Taunton, MA on June 30, 2011. The new phone number for the agency will be 508-880-0185.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this relocation please refer them to Julie Viveiros, Bristol/Norfolk County FSA County Executive Director at 508-669-6621 ext. 102 until June 30, 2011 or 508-880-0185 after June 30, 2011 or by email anytime at julie.viveiros@ma.usda.gov.

USDA Notice to Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers: Compensation for Claims of Discrimination

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Richard Burke and Rural Development State Director Jay Healy want to remind farmers and landowners that as part of continued efforts to close the chapter on all allegations that discrimination occurred at USDA in past decades, a process has been established to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans.

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers.

The program provides up to \$50,000 for each Hispanic or woman farmer who can show that USDA denied them a loan or loan servicing for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. Hispanic or female farmers who provide additional proof and meet other requirements can receive a \$50,000 award. Successful claimants are also eligible for funds to pay the taxes on their awards and for forgiveness of certain existing USDA loans. No filing fee or other costs to claimants are required to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary, and individuals who opt not to participate are not precluded by the program from filing a complaint in court.

In conjunction with this announcement, USDA is launching an outreach effort to potential claimants that will include a call center for farmers and ranchers, a website, public service announcements, and in-person meetings around the country. Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov. Individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) 2011 Summer Conference

AUGUST 12-14, 2011, UMass Amherst

Keynote Speakers: Eric Toensmeier, Perennial Edibles Expert, and Dr. Ignacio Chapela of UC Berkeley, GMO Activist.

Over 200 Workshops on Organic Gardening, Farming, Food Politics, Permaculture, Homesteading, Landscaping, Draft-Animal Power, Alternative Energy, Livestock, Cooking, and more! Hundreds of Vendors and Exhibitors. Live Entertainment. Children's and Teen Conference. Country Fair and Farmer's Market. Silent Auction. This year NOFA is proud to partner with the Draft-Animal Power Network. Spend the weekend or come for the day. Activities for all ages.

To register: www.nofasummerconference.org, info@nofasummerconference.org, 978-355-2853.

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MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/agcommishsoares.